

108  
Greatest Of All Times

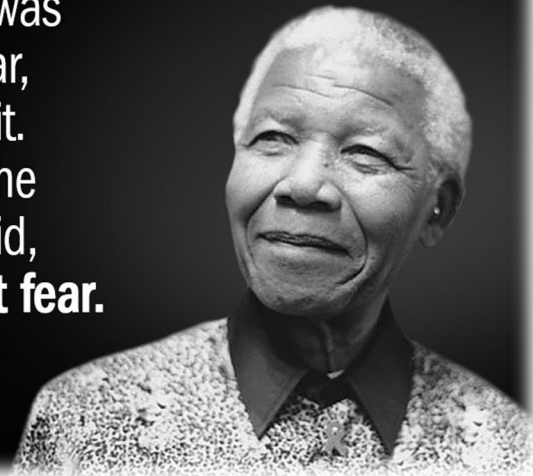


Globally selected  
Personalities

I learned that **courage** was  
not the absence of fear,  
but the **triumph** over it.  
The **brave** man is not he  
who does not feel afraid,  
but he who **conquers that fear**.

– Nelson Mandela

AZ QUOTES



18 Jul 1918 <::><::><::> 5 Dec 2013

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18 Jul 1918



5 Dec 2013

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela  
The Nobel Peace Prize 1993

Residence at the time of the award: South Africa

Prize motivation:

"for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new democratic South Africa"

Prize share: 1/2

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1993/mandela/biographical/>  
<https://www.nelsonmandela.org/biography>



# Nelson Mandela

## Biography

Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the village of **Mvezo**, in the Eastern Cape, on 18 July 1918. His mother was Nonqaphi Nosekeni and his father was Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla Mandela, principal counsellor to the Acting King of the Thembu people, Jongintaba Dalindyebo. In 1930, when he was 12 years old, his father died and the young Rolihlahla became a ward of Jongintaba at the Great Place in Mqhekezweni<sup>1</sup>.

Hearing the elders' stories of his ancestors' valour during the wars of resistance, he dreamed also of making his own contribution to the freedom struggle of his people.

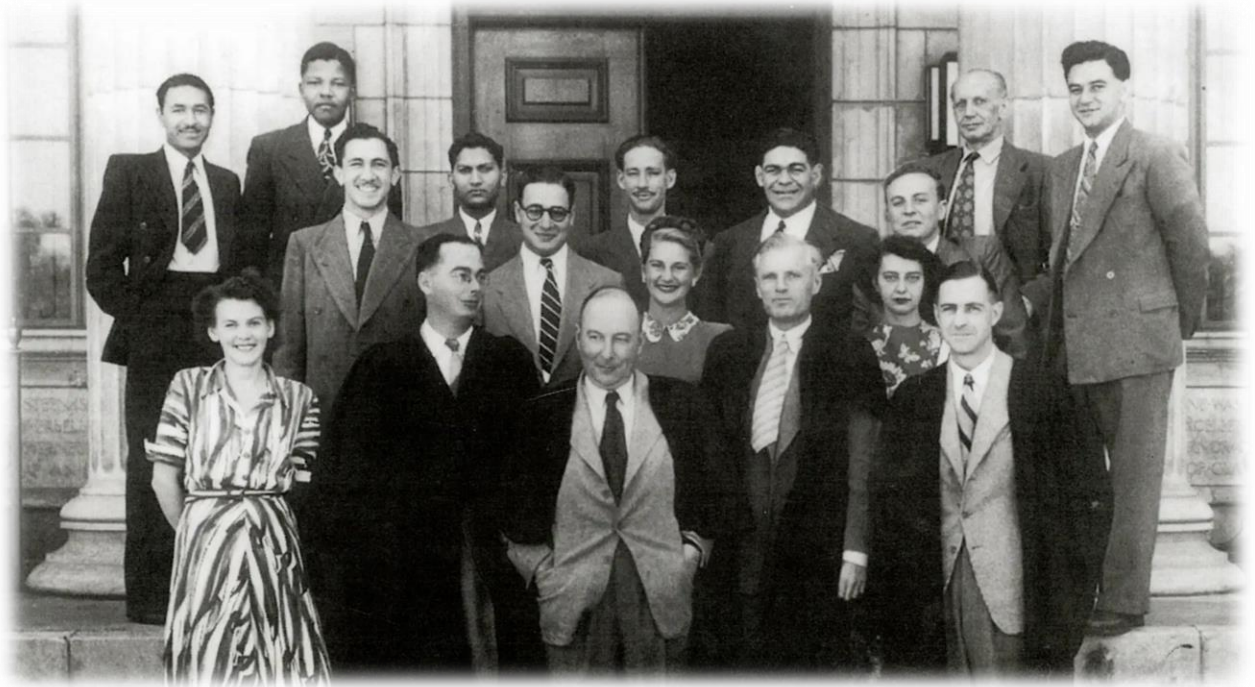
He attended primary school in **Qunu** where his teacher, Miss Mdingane, gave him the name Nelson, in accordance with the custom of giving all schoolchildren "Christian" names.

He completed his Junior Certificate at Clarkebury Boarding Institute and went on to Healdtown, a Wesleyan secondary school of some repute, where he matriculated.

Mandela began his studies for a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University College of Fort Hare but did not complete the degree there as he was expelled for joining in a student protest.

On his return to the Great Place at Mqhekezweni the King was furious and said if he didn't return to Fort Hare he would arrange wives for him and his cousin Justice. They ran away to Johannesburg instead, arriving there in 1941. There he worked as a mine security officer and after meeting Walter Sisulu, an estate agent, he was introduced to Lazer Sidelsky. He then did his articles through a firm of attorneys - Witkin, Eidelman and Sidelsky.

He completed his BA through the University of South Africa and went back to Fort Hare for his graduation in 1943.



[Nelson Mandela (top row, second from left) on the steps of Wits University]

Meanwhile, he began studying for an LLB at the University of the Witwatersrand. By his own admission he was a poor student and left the university in 1952 without graduating. He only started studying again through the University of London after his imprisonment in 1962 but also did not complete that degree.

In 1989, while in the last months of his imprisonment, he obtained an LLB through the University of South Africa. He graduated in absentia at a ceremony in Cape Town.

### **Entering politics**

Mandela, while increasingly politically involved from 1942, only joined the African National Congress in 1944 when he helped to form the ANC Youth League (ANCYL).

In 1944 he married Walter Sisulu's cousin, Evelyn Mase, a nurse. They had two sons, Madiba Thembekile "Thembi" and Makgatho, and two daughters both called Makaziwe, the first of whom died in infancy. He and his wife divorced in 1958.

Mandela rose through the ranks of the ANCYL and through its efforts, the ANC adopted a more radical mass-based policy, the Programme of Action, in 1949.



[Nelson Mandela on the roof of Kholvad House in 1953]

In 1952 he was chosen as the National Volunteer-in-Chief of the Defiance Campaign with Maulvi Cachalia as his deputy. This campaign of civil disobedience against six unjust laws was a joint programme between the ANC and the South African Indian Congress. He and 19 others were charged under the Suppression of Communism Act for their part in the campaign and sentenced to nine months of hard labour, suspended for two years.

A two-year diploma in law on top of his BA allowed Mandela to practise law, and in August 1952 he and Oliver Tambo established South Africa's first black-owned law firm in the 1950s, Mandela & Tambo.

At the end of 1952 he was banned for the first time. As a restricted person he was only permitted to watch in secret as the Freedom Charter was adopted in Kliptown on 26 June 1955.

### **The Treason Trial**

Mandela was arrested in a countrywide police swoop on 5 December 1956, which led to the 1956 Treason Trial. Men and women of all races found themselves in the dock in the marathon trial that only ended when the last 28 accused, including Mandela, were acquitted on 29 March 1961.

On 21 March 1960 police killed 69 unarmed people in a protest in Sharpeville against the pass laws. This led to the country's first state of emergency and the banning of the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) on 8 April. Mandela and his colleagues in the Treason Trial were among thousands detained during the state of emergency.

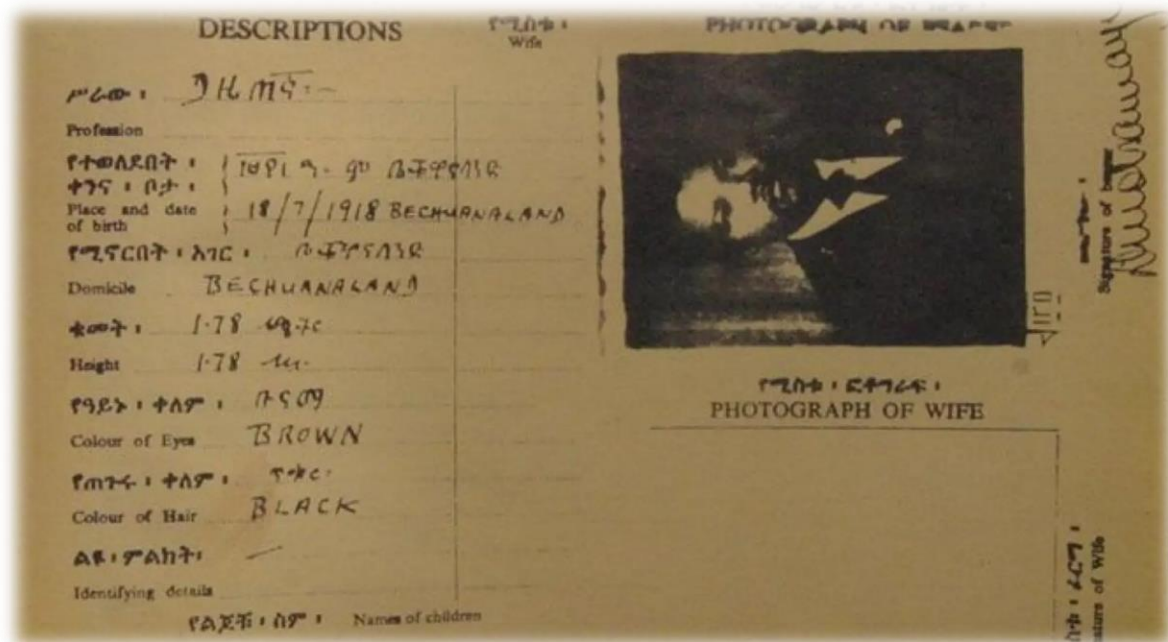
During the trial Mandela married a social worker, Winnie Madikizela, on 14 June 1958. They had two daughters, Zenani and Zindziswa. The couple divorced in 1996.

Days before the end of the Treason Trial, Mandela travelled to Pietermaritzburg to speak at the All-in Africa Conference, which resolved that he should write to Prime Minister Verwoerd requesting a national convention on a non-racial constitution, and to warn that should he not agree there would be a national strike against South Africa becoming a republic. After he and his colleagues were acquitted in the Treason Trial, Mandela went underground and began planning a national strike for 29, 30 and 31 March.

In the face of massive mobilisation of state security, the strike was called off early. In June 1961 he was asked to lead the armed struggle and helped to establish Umkhonto weSizwe (Spear of the Nation), which launched on 16 December 1961 with a series of explosions.

On 11 January 1962, using the adopted name David Motsamayi, Mandela secretly left South Africa. He travelled around Africa and visited England to gain support for the armed struggle. He received

military training in Morocco and Ethiopia and returned to South Africa in July 1962. He was arrested in a police roadblock outside Howick on 5 August while returning from KwaZulu-Natal, where he had briefed ANC President Chief Albert Luthuli about his trip.



[Madiba travelled with his Ethiopian Passport]

He was charged with leaving the country without a permit and inciting workers to strike. He was convicted and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, which he began serving at the Pretoria Local Prison. On 27 May 1963 he was transferred to **Robben Island** and returned to Pretoria on 12 June. Within a month police raided Liliesleaf, a secret hideout in Rivonia, Johannesburg, used by ANC and Communist Party activists, and several of his comrades were arrested.

On 9 October 1963 Mandela joined 10 others on trial for sabotage in what became known as the Rivonia Trial. While facing the death penalty his words to the court at the end of his famous "Speech from the Dock" on 20 April 1964 became immortalised:

*"I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."*

[Speech from the Dock quote by Nelson Mandela on 20 April 1964]

On 11 June 1964 Mandela and seven other accused, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Denis Goldberg, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni, were convicted and the next day were sentenced to life imprisonment. Goldberg was sent to Pretoria Prison because he was white, while the others went to Robben Island.

Mandela's mother died in 1968 and his eldest son, Thembi, in 1969. He was not allowed to attend their funerals.

On 31 March 1982 Mandela was transferred to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town with Sisulu, Mhlaba and Mlangeni. Kathrada joined them in October. When he returned to the prison in November 1985 after prostate surgery, Mandela was held alone. Justice Minister Kobie Coetsee visited him in hospital. Later Mandela initiated talks about an ultimate meeting between the apartheid government and the ANC.



[A picture captured during a rare visit from his comrades at Victor Verster Prison]

## Release from prison

On 12 August 1988 he was taken to hospital where he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. After more than three months in two hospitals he was transferred on 7 December 1988 to a house at Victor Verster Prison near Paarl where he spent his last 14 months of imprisonment. He was released from its gates on Sunday 11 February 1990, nine days after the unbanning of the ANC and the PAC and nearly four months after the release of his remaining Rivonia comrades. Throughout his imprisonment he had rejected at least three conditional offers of release.

Mandela immersed himself in official talks to end white minority rule and in 1991 was elected ANC President to replace his ailing friend, Oliver Tambo. In 1993 he and President FW de Klerk jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize and on 27 April 1994 he voted for the first time in his life.

## President

On 10 May 1994 he was inaugurated as South Africa's first democratically elected President. On his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1998 he married Graça Machel, his third wife.

True to his promise, Mandela stepped down in 1999 after one term as President. He continued to work with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund he set up in 1995 and established the Nelson Mandela Foundation and The Mandela Rhodes Foundation.

In April 2007 his grandson, Mandla Mandela, was installed as head of the Mvezo Traditional Council at a ceremony at the Mvezo Great Place.

Nelson Mandela never wavered in his devotion to democracy, equality and learning. Despite terrible provocation, he never answered racism with racism. His life is an inspiration to all who are oppressed and deprived; and to all who are opposed to oppression and deprivation.

He died at his home in Johannesburg on 5 December 2013.

1. Nelson Mandela's father died in 1930 when Mandela was 12 and his mother died in 1968 when he was in prison. While the autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom* says his father died when he was nine, historical evidence shows it must have been later, most likely 1930. In fact, the original *Long Walk to Freedom* manuscript (written on Robben Island) states the year as 1930, when he was 12.

2. have established that there were at least 2 other black owned law firms before Mandela and Tambo.



## Africa's Greatest Freedom Symbol

Son of a chief, Nelson Mandela studied law and became one of South Africa's first black lawyers. Early in the 1950s he was elected leader of the youth wing of the ANC (African National Congress) liberation movement. When the country's white minority government prohibited the ANC in 1960, Mandela became convinced that armed struggle was inevitable. Inspired by the guerrilla wars in Algeria and Cuba, he organized a military underground movement that engaged in sabotage. In 1962 he was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for high treason and conspiracy against the state.

From 1964 to 1982 he was confined to the notorious prison island Robben Island, together with several other resistance leaders. He was then moved to prison on the mainland until his release in 1990. During his imprisonment, Mandela became a rallying point for South Africa's oppressed, and the world's most famous political prisoner.



Nelson Mandela (left) and F.W. de Klerk receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, December 10, 1993.

Nelson Mandela shared the Peace Prize with the man who had released him, President Frederik Willem de Klerk, because they had agreed on a peaceful transition to majority rule.

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## Incarceration

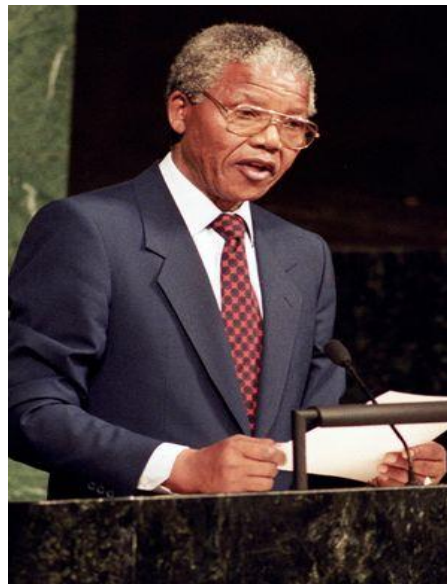


**Robben Island Prison** A replica of the Robben Island cell in which Nelson Mandela was imprisoned, at the Nelson Mandela Museum, Qunu, Eastern Cape province, South Africa.

From 1964 to 1982 Mandela was incarcerated at Robben Island Prison, off Cape Town. He was subsequently kept at the maximum-security Pollsmoor Prison until 1988, when, after being treated for tuberculosis, he was transferred to Victor Verster Prison near Paarl. The South African government periodically made conditional offers of freedom to Mandela, most notably in 1976, on the condition that he recognize the newly independent—and highly controversial—status of the Transkei Bantustan and agree to reside there. An offer made in 1985 required that he renounce the use of violence. Mandela refused both offers, the second on the premise that only free men were able to engage in such negotiations and, as a prisoner, he was not a free man.

Throughout his incarceration, Mandela retained wide support among [South Africa's](#) Black population, and his imprisonment became a cause célèbre among the international [community](#) that condemned [apartheid](#). As South Africa's political situation deteriorated after 1983, and particularly after 1988, he was engaged by ministers of Pres. [P.W. Botha](#)'s government in exploratory negotiations; he met with Botha's successor, [de Klerk](#), in December 1989.

On February 11, 1990, the South African government under President de Klerk released Mandela from prison. Shortly after his release, Mandela was chosen deputy president of the ANC; he became president of the party in July 1991. Mandela led the ANC in negotiations with de Klerk to end apartheid and bring about a peaceful transition to non-racial democracy in South Africa.



[Nelson Mandela](#): Several months after his release from prison, Nelson Mandela addressed the Special Committee Against Apartheid, convened in his honor at the UN General Assembly, on June 22, 1990, in New York City; he later became president of the African National Congress and then president of South Africa.

(☺)= (☺)



**Apartheid-era sign**, part of an exhibition in the Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg, South Africa.

*"Our march to freedom is irreversible.  
We must not allow fear to stand in our way" <<< Nelson Mandela*

## **His Great QUOTES**

<https://parade.com/1074913/kelseypelzer/nelson-mandela-quotes/>

1. "Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again."
2. "It always seems impossible until it's done."
3. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
4. "One cannot be prepared for something while secretly believing it will not happen."
5. "What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead."
6. "Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies."
7. "For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."
8. "There is nothing like returning to a place that remains unchanged to find the ways in which you yourself have altered."
9. "I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can only rest for a

moment, for with freedom come responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended."

10. "Lead from the back — and let others believe they are in front."

11. "I am not a saint, unless you think of a saint as a sinner who keeps on trying."

12. "There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

13. "As I have said, the first thing is to be honest with yourself. You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself."

14. "Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do."

15. "It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails."

16. "A winner is a dreamer who never gives up."

17. "Live life as though nobody is watching, and express yourself as though everyone is listening."

18. "I had no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people. There was no particular day on which I said, Henceforth I will devote myself to the liberation of my people; instead, I simply found myself doing so, and could not do otherwise."

19. "I hate race discrimination most intensely and in all its manifestations. I have fought it all during my life; I fight it now and will do so until the end of my days."

20. "Sometimes it falls upon a generation to be great, you can be that generation."

21. "It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another."

22. "We must use time creatively, and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right."

23. "There is a universal respect and even admiration for those who are humble and simple by nature, and who have absolute confidence in all human beings irrespective of their social status."

24. "I have never cared very much for personal prizes. A person does not become a freedom fighter in the hope of winning awards."

25. "I never lose. I either win or learn."

26. "I like friends who have independent minds because they tend to make you see problems from all angles."

27. "Man's goodness is a flame that can be hidden but never extinguished.
28. "I learned that to humiliate another person is to make him suffer an unnecessarily cruel fate. Even as a boy, I defeated my opponents without dishonoring them."
29. "Although I am a gregarious person, I love solitude even more."
30. "As long as many of our people still live in utter poverty, as long as children still live under plastic covers, as long as many of our people are still without jobs, no South African should rest and wallow in the joy of freedom."

(☺)===== (☺)

## ***The timeline of a lifetime [1918-2013]***

**A chronology of important events in his life.**

Year	Date	Event
1918	July 18	Born Rolihlahla Mandela at Mvezo in the Transkei
1925		Attends primary school near Qunu (receives the name 'Nelson' from a teacher)
1930		Father dies. Entrusted to Thembu Regent Jongintaba Dalindyebo at the age of 12  <i>While his autobiography Long Walk to Freedom places Mandela's father's death in 1927, historical evidence shows it must have been later, most likely 1930. In fact, the original Long Walk to Freedom manuscript (written on Robben Island) states the year as 1930.</i>
1934		Undergoes initiation; Attends Clarkebury Boarding Institute in Engcobo
1937		Attends Healdtown, the Wesleyan College at Fort Beaufort
1939		Enrols at the University College of Fort Hare, in Alice
1940		Expelled

1941		Escapes an arranged marriage; becomes a mine security officer; starts articles at the law firm Witkin, Sidelsky & Eidelman
1942		Completes BA through the University of South Africa (UNISA)
1942		Begins to attend African National Congress (ANC) meetings informally
1943		Graduates with BA from Fort Hare; Enrols for an LLB at Wits University
1944		Co-founds the ANC Youth League (ANCYL); marries Evelyn Ntoko Mase - they have four children: Thembekile (1945); Makaziwe (1947 - who dies after nine months); Makgatho (1950); Makaziwe (1954)
1948		Elected national secretary of the ANCYL
1951		Elected President of the ANCYL
1952		Defiance Campaign begins; Arrested and charged for violating the Suppression of Communism Act; Elected Transvaal ANC President; Convicted with J.S Moroka, Walter Sisulu and 17 others under the Suppression of Communism Act; Sentenced to nine months imprisonment with hard labour, suspended for two years; Elected first of ANC deputy presidents; Opens law firm with Oliver Tambo - the only black law firm in Johannesburg in the 1950s
1953		Devises the M-Plan for the ANC's future underground operations
1955	26 June	Watches as the Congress of the People at Kliptown adopts the Freedom Charter
1956	5 December	Arrested and later joins 155 others on trial for treason. All are acquitted by 29 March 1961
1958		Divorces Evelyn Mase; Marries Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela - they have two daughters: Zenani (1959) and Zindzi (1960)
1960	21 March	Sharpeville Massacre
	30 March	A State of Emergency is imposed and he is among thousands detained
	8 April	The ANC is banned

1961		Goes underground; <i>Umkhonto weSizwe</i> (MK) is formed
1962	11 January	Leaves the country for military training and to garner support for the ANC
	23 July	Returns to South Africa
	5 August	Arrested near Howick in KwaZulu-Natal
	7 November	Sentenced to five years in prison for incitement and leaving the country without a passport
1963	27 May	Sent to Robben Island
	12 June	Returned to Pretoria Local Prison
	9 October	Appears in court for the first time in what becomes known as the Rivonia Trial, with Walter Sisulu, Denis Goldberg, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Lionel 'Rusty' Bernstein, Raymond Mhlaba, James Kantor, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni
	3 December	Pleads not guilty to sabotage in the Rivonia Trial
1964	4 June	James Kantor discharged and released
	12 June	All except Rusty Bernstein are convicted and sentenced to life
	13 June	Arrives on Robben Island
1969	13 July	Thembekile is killed in a car accident
1982	31 March	Mandela, Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba and Andrew Mlangeni and later Ahmed Kathrada are sent to Pollsmoor Prison
1985	10 February	Rejects, through his daughter, Zindzi, South African President PW Botha's offer to release him if he renounces violence
1985	3 November	Admitted to the Volks Hospital for prostate surgery

	23 November	Discharged from Volks Hospital and returned to Pollsmoor Prison
1988	12 August	Admitted to Tygerberg Hospital where he is diagnosed with tuberculosis
	31 August	Admitted to Constantiaberg MediClinic
	7 December	Moved to Victor Verster Prison in Paarl where he is held for 14 months in a cottage
1990	2 February	ANC is unbanned
	11 February	Released
	2 March	Elected ANC Deputy President
1993	10 December	Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with President FW de Klerk
1994	27 April	Votes for the first time in his life
	9 May	Elected by Parliament as first president of a democratic South Africa
	10 May	Inaugurated as President of the Republic of South Africa
	14 December	Launches his autobiography <i>Long Walk to Freedom</i>
1995		Establishes the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund
1996		Divorces Winnie Mandela
1998	18 July	Marries Graça Machel on his 80th birthday
1999		Steps down after one term as President, establishes the Nelson Mandela Foundation
2001		Diagnosed with prostate cancer
2003		Establishes the Mandela Rhodes Foundation

2004	1 June	Announces that he will be stepping down from public life
2005	6 January	Announces that his eldest son Makgatho had died of AIDS
2007	13 April	Attends the installation of his grandson Mandla as chief of the Mvezo Traditional Council
2008	27 June	Asks future generations to continue the fight for social justice
	18 July	Turns 90 years old
2009		Votes for the fourth time in his life; Attends the inauguration of President Jacob Zuma on 9 May and witnesses Zuma's first State of the Nation address; Turns 91
2010		Formally presented with the Fifa World Cup trophy before it embarks on a tour of South Africa
	11 June	His great-granddaughter Zenani is killed in a car accident
	17 June	Attends the funeral of his great-granddaughter Zenani
	11 July	Makes a surprise appearance at the final of the Fifa World Cup in Soweto
	18 July	Celebrates his 92nd birthday at home in Johannesburg with family and friends
	12 October	His second book <i>Conversations with Myself</i> is published
	18 November	Meets the South African and American football teams that played in the Nelson Mandela Challenge match
2011	January	Admitted to hospital in Johannesburg. Discharged after two nights
	16 May	Votes in the local government elections
	27 June	His book <i>Nelson Mandela by Himself: The Authorised Book of Quotations</i> is launched
	21 June	Visited at home by American First Lady Michelle Obama and her daughters Sasha and Malia

	18 July	Celebrates his 93rd birthday with his family in Qunu, Eastern Cape
	21 October	Officially counted in South Africa's Census 2011
	25 December	Spends Christmas with family in Qunu, Transkei
2012	25 February	Admitted to hospital
	26 February	Discharged from hospital
	18 July	Celebrates his 94th birthday with his family in Qunu, Transkei
	8 December	Admitted to hospital
	26 December	Discharged from hospital
2013	1 January	Spends New Year's Day with members of his family in Johannesburg
	9 March	Admitted to hospital
	10 March 10	Discharged from hospital
	27 March	Admitted to hospital
	6 April	Discharged from hospital
	8 June	Admitted to hospital
	18 July	Spends his 95 <sup>th</sup> birthday in hospital
	1 September	Discharged from hospital
	5 December	Passes away at home in Johannesburg



NELSON MANDELA  
FOUNDATION

*Living the legacy*

<https://www.nelsonmandela.org/>

The Nelson Mandela Foundation is a non-profit organisation focused on memory, dialogue and legacy work, founded by Nelson Mandela in 1999. We are the custodian of his life and times; we are a committed facilitator of his living legacy; and we are mandated to promote his lifelong vision of freedom and equality for all.

Part of the preservation and advancement of Madiba's legacy and making this legacy available to the world is the provision and ongoing preservation of its extensive archive collection materials.

The archival record relating to Nelson Mandela is infinite, fragmentary and scattered, both geographically and institutionally throughout the world, making it almost impossible to physically locate. The imperative, therefore, is to document this vast resource, facilitate access to it, and promote its preservation and use.

The following webpages and archival databases are efforts to capture both local and international repositories as well as to describe the collections we hold here at the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory.

These resources are works in progress and will be added to as additional information is received. Please contact us if you are aware of other resources we have not yet identified.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation was established in 1999 when its Founder, Mr Nelson Mandela, stepped down as the President of South Africa.

Mr Mandela was South Africa's first democratically elected President. On 9 May 1994, soon after our landmark election results were in, he was unanimously elected President by South Africa's new Members of Parliament.

The next day, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was sworn in at an inauguration ceremony at the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

He vowed to serve only one term as President, and in 1999 he stepped down to make way for Thabo Mbeki.

*"In the life of any individual, family, community or society, memory is of fundamental importance. It is the fabric of identity."*

<<< Nelson Mandela

Soon after Mr Mbeki was inaugurated as President on 16 June 1999, Mr Mandela was on the telephone to rally his staff for the new tasks ahead. They had to remind him they no longer worked for him, and so the Nelson Mandela Foundation was born. As Mr Mandela's post-presidential office, it provided the base for his charitable work, covering a wide range of endeavours: from building schools to HIV/AIDS work, from research into education in rural areas to peace and reconciliation interventions.

Five years later, the Foundation began its transition into an organisation focused on memory, dialogue and legacy work. A comprehensive refurbishment of the Foundation's building provided it with an appropriate physical home, the Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory. The Centre was [opened on 18 November 2013](#), three years to the day after Mr Mandela last used the building as his office.

### **Founding principles of the Nelson Mandela Foundation**

- The creation, establishment, protection and preservation of a Centre of Memory about Mr Mandela, which contains an archive of the life and times, works, and writings of the Founder
- Convening dialogue around critical social issues, including particular issues regarding human rights and democracy, in order to contribute to a just society
- The promotion of, or engaging in, philosophical activities, including discussion regarding issues pertaining to human rights and democracy
- The raising of funds in furtherance of the Trust's objectives
- The provision of support services to, or the promotion of the common interests of, public benefit organisations

### **Vision**

Our vision is a just society, one which learns from its pasts and listens to all its voices.

### **Mission**

Our mission is to contribute to the making of a just society by mobilising the legacy of Nelson Mandela, providing public access to information on his life and times, and convening dialogue on critical social issues.

### **Core work**

To deliver to the world an integrated and dynamic information resource on the life and times of Nelson Mandela, and promote the finding of sustainable solutions to critical social problems through memory-based dialogue interventions.

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# Nelson Mandela

## Obituary

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/05/nelson-mandela-obituary>

Hero of the apartheid struggle, he spent 26 years in jail and then became South Africa's first democratically elected president

One must go back to Dallas, Texas, in 1963 to find a comparable occasion of collective bereavement as that which has met the death of [Nelson Mandela](#), at the age of 95. Even the assassination of President John F Kennedy registered less resonantly in the days before the global village – and, in any case, the trajectory of the American politician's life represented promise shattered rather than hope fulfilled.

Mandela has surely been venerated by more millions in his lifetime than any political figure in history. In working to free his country from racial division, he led an essentially peaceful revolution, culminating in his release from prison in 1990 and the post-apartheid election of 1994, which saw him elected as the first president of a democratic [South Africa](#). The world responded to the qualities it perceived in the man, as well as to the scale of his achievement.

Was he born to it, this child of royal descent? His uncompromising defiance of a cruelly repressive government – as commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the Spear of the Nation – spoke loud. Was he a great general, or a great politician, this herds boy who became a president and more? Was he a great orator? He did, after all, in his statement from the dock in the Rivonia trial make one of the most memorable speeches in the annals of political struggle. Or was his statesmanship what mattered, bringing peace to a nation that seemed destined for bloody racial war? Curiously, Mandela's greatness seems to have lain in all these things, and yet in none of them.

His birth, into the royal house of the Thembu people, was central to the man. But as royalty goes, his place in Xhosa tribal society was barely of the high-born. His father, Gadla Henry Mphakanyiswa, was a descendant of a 19th-century tribal monarch, Ngubengcuka, but through the so-called "left-hand house", which did not stand in the direct line of succession. His mother, Nosekeni Fanny, was the third of four wives, and Rolihlahla – "pulling the branch of a tree" or, more colloquially, "troublemaker" – was the youngest of his father's four sons. "Apart from life, a strong constitution and an abiding connection to the Thembu royal house, the only thing my father bestowed upon me at birth was a name," Mandela recalled in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994).

And African tribal monarchy was not European in form. "We slept on mats, without pillows, resting our heads on our elbows," recalled one of Mandela's nine sisters, Nobandhla, in Fatima Meer's biography *Higher Than Hope*. "Our mother's stove was a hole in the ground over which she put a grate." As a child, Mandela was forced to wear his father's hand-me-downs, cutting a comic figure in adult trousers amputated at the knees and belted with a piece of string.

A child's world is bounded by what they see. When Mandela was born at Mvezo, near Umtata, 120 miles north-east of East London, in the native reserve of the Transkei in the Eastern Cape, he was an aristocrat in his small world, even if his first duty, aged five, after the family moved to nearby Qunu, was as a shepherd. At the age of seven, he went to school, the first of his family to do so. On that first day he was given the name of Nelson to answer to; each child had to have an English as well as an indigenous name; whether his teacher had the British naval hero in mind in his case, he never knew.

He was nine when his father died of a lung disease. According to Nelson's sister, Mabel, he made a dying bequest to the Thembu regent, David Dalindyebo, giving Nelson into his care. "I can see from the way he speaks to his sisters and friends that his inclination is to help the nation," Mabel quoted her father as telling the regent.

The bequest took Nelson to the Thembu capital, Mqhekezweni, the "great place", where he became part of the royal family, being treated by Dalindyebo and his wife as their own child. "As a leader, I have always followed the principles I first saw demonstrated by the regent at the 'great place'," Mandela recalled. "I have always endeavoured to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Often times, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I heard in the discussion."

Courage was also a prerequisite of tribal manhood. In his autobiography, Mandela recounted, with pained humour, the story of his circumcision – an ordeal that took place when he was 16. The *ingcici*, the man making the cut, used an *assegai* (fighting spear) for the operation. The 26 boys sharing the rite of passage sat naked on their blankets, legs splayed in front of them. According to Xhosa tradition, when the blow was delivered, the victim would shout *Ndiyindoda* (I am a man!). "I was tense and anxious, uncertain of how I would react when the crucial moment came," Mandela recalled. To flinch, or cry out, would have been a sign of weakness. "I was determined not to disgrace myself, the group or my guardian. Circumcision is a trial of bravery and stoicism; no anaesthetic is used; a man must suffer in silence."

The moment arrived, the old man kneeling in front of him, face pale and shining with the perspiration of a shared tension. "Without a word he took my foreskin, pulled it forward and then, in a single motion, brought down his *assegai*. I felt as if fire was shooting through my veins. The pain was so intense that I buried my chin in my chest. Many seconds seemed to pass before I remembered the cry and then I recovered and called out: '*Ndiyindoda*'.

"I looked down and saw a perfect cut, clean and round like a ring. But I felt ashamed because the other boys seemed much stronger and firmer than I had been ... I felt distressed that I had been disabled, however briefly, by the pain, and I did my best to hide my agony. A boy may cry. A man hides his pain." Hiding his agony was to become a way of life for Mandela.

In the family tradition, he was groomed to become a counsellor to the future king, Sabata. He was sent to a Methodist mission school, Clarkebury, 25 miles south-west of Umtata. The governor, the Rev Cecil Harris, was the first white man he shook hands with. His first day in class was also the first time he wore shoes. At 19, he moved to another Methodist school, Healdtown, in Fort Beaufort, 175 miles south-west of Umtata, and then to nearby Fort Hare University College, at the time South Africa's only black university, where he developed a close friendship with Kaiser Matanzima. Ironically, Matanzima was later to be excoriated by the world's anti-apartheid community as a "bantustan" leader – prime minister of the Transkei homeland.

Mandela greatly enjoyed university, particularly boxing and athletics, and, on the strength of his first-year studies in English, anthropology, politics, native administration and Roman-Dutch law, nursed an ambition to become a civil servant and interpreter – about as high a position as a black man might aspire to in those days. But his ambition seemed to be crushed when, in 1940, in his second year, as a member of the student representative council he was expelled for his part in a rebellion over poor quality food. He returned to Mqhekezweni to find another potential disaster – an arranged marriage was being planned for him.

To escape the nuptials, in 1941 he ran away to Johannesburg, where he landed a job as a night watchman guarding the compound entrance of a goldmine. Equipped with a whistle, a flashlight and a club, he had to stand next to a sign warning "Beware. Natives crossing here", and check the identity of everyone passing.



**Nelson Mandela embracing Walter Sisulu in 2002.**

By this time Mandela had abandoned his dream of becoming an interpreter in favour of a career in the law. A cousin introduced him to the future ANC leader Walter Sisulu, then running an estate agency in central Johannesburg. Sisulu took him to a local law firm, Witkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman, with whom he did business, and they agreed to take him on as a clerk while he completed a University of South Africa BA by correspondence. "It was a Jewish firm, and in my experience I have found Jews to be more broadminded than most whites on issues of race and politics, perhaps because they themselves have historically been victims of prejudice," Mandela observed.

At the office and at Sisulu's home, he began mixing with more radical members of black society. He also met his first wife, Evelyn Mase, a cousin of Sisulu. She was a trainee nurse from the Transkei, four years younger than her future husband. They married in 1944 and had two sons and two daughters, both called Makaziwe, since the first died in infancy. The marriage broke up in 1956 after Evelyn, a Jehovah's Witness, reputedly demanded that Mandela choose between her and the ANC, and divorce followed in 1958. She died in 2004, and of their four children only Makaziwe survives.

Mandela was always unable to pin-point when he first became politicised, though his circle of white and radical friends widened after he started a part-time law degree at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1943. His first appearance on the political stage came in 1944, with the launch of the ANC Youth League, a ginger group determined to radicalise, or replace, the staid leadership of the ANC. Mandela was a founder executive member.

Then, in 1948, the exclusively Afrikaner Nationalist party won the whites-only general election, and began to institute its policy of apartheid across South Africa. In response, the ANC started looking for alliances with communist and Asian groups to organise civil disobedience campaigns. By then, thanks in large part to the youth league, the ANC had been rejuvenated. Chief Albert Luthuli was president, Mandela his deputy. A measure of his new prominence was that he got his first banning order.



Nelson Mandela with fellow anti-apartheid activist Ruth First at an ANC conference in 1951.

In August of that year, Mandela, having abandoned his LLB but now qualified as an attorney, set up a law partnership with the man who would stand in for him during the long years of imprisonment, Oliver Tambo. The firm of Mandela and Tambo was South Africa's only partnership of black lawyers, so its services were greatly in demand. But while the two attorneys used their legal know-how to promote their political ends, the failure of conventional campaigning to stop the removal of the black population of the Johannesburg suburb of Sophiatown in February 1955 convinced Mandela that the ANC had no alternative but to take up armed resistance: "A freedom fighter learns the hard way that it is the oppressor who defines the nature of the struggle, and the oppressed is often left no recourse but to use methods that mirror those of the oppressor. At a certain point, one can only fight fire with fire." The political objectives of this new urgency were defined in the Freedom Charter, drawn up over two days in June 1955 by an ANC-led rainbow alliance known as the Congress of the People.

The government, however, pre-empted further action when, in December 1956, it arrested Mandela and 155 other activists for high treason, on the grounds that the charter implied communist revolution. During the two weeks before her husband was released on bail, Evelyn and the children moved out of the family home – Mandela was most shocked by the fact that she even took the curtains. The state found difficulty making its case, and it took until January 1958 before the magistrate committed 95 of the defendants for trial at the Transvaal supreme court.

While the hearing had a disastrous effect on his law firm, Mandela had the consolation during it of meeting Nomzamo Winifred "Winnie" Madikizela. They got married in June 1958, and in August he was back in court. The prosecution was struggling to demonstrate violent intent and the trial was still dragging on when, on 26 March 1960, 69 Africans demonstrating against the pass laws were shot dead by the police in Sharpeville, 35 miles south of Johannesburg. By the time the trial ended a year later, with the remaining 29 defendants acquitted, it had become a platform for the declaration of ANC ideals.



Nelson and Winnie Mandela pose for their wedding photo in 1957.

By then, Tambo had left South Africa to start an external wing of the ANC, and the country was on the point of leaving the Commonwealth, which was no longer willing to tolerate apartheid. Straight after the verdict, Mandela went underground, earning himself a reputation as the "black pimpernel" as he stayed one step ahead of the authorities. In June 1961, he persuaded the ANC leadership to pursue a course of violence, with himself as the head of MK, and immediately recruited Sisulu and the white communist Joe Slovo to lead a force whose cutting edge was a small group of explosives experts.

Part of Mandela's time was spent on a farm at Liliesleaf, in Rivonia, a suburb north of Johannesburg. Winnie brought him an old air rifle for target practice. One day, he shot a sparrow with it and was mortified when the five-year-old son of a friend rounded on him, saying: "Why did you kill that bird? Its mother will be sad." "My mood immediately shifted from one of pride to shame," Mandela recalled. "I felt that this small boy had far more humanity than I did. It was an odd sensation for a man who was the leader of a nascent guerrilla army."

Reluctant to cause loss of life, MK first made its presence felt through explosions at government installations in December 1961. In the new year, Mandela got his first taste of the world outside South Africa, when he went on a whirlwind tour of the continent, visiting Tanzania, Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Mali and Egypt. He also spent 10 days in London.

Returning home, he was finally captured in August 1962, masquerading as a chauffeur. Speculation as to how the police found him included claims that the CIA tipped them off. But there was an amateurish quality to the ANC's operations at the time, and so several possible explanations as to how he was betrayed. He was sentenced to three years for incitement, and another two years for leaving the country without a passport. Then, in October 1963, he was brought to court again as the "number one accused" in the Rivonia trial, alongside those ANC leaders arrested at the farm that July, and charged with sabotage.

Looking back, it seems inconceivable that those accused of treason at Rivonia could have been hanged, but such an outcome was entirely plausible. A member of the Johannesburg bench privately claims that he saved them by persuading the trial judge, Quartus De Wet, to change his mind over a cup of tea in the judicial common room, just before he returned to court for sentencing. De Wet, it seems, had been set on hanging.

Many years later, in 1995, Mandela – delivering the first annual lecture in memory of the Communist party leader Bram Fischer, who was his defence counsel at Rivonia – drew roars of laughter by recalling his dismay when he sought comfort from a friendly warder on the eve of sentencing. Hoping to be contradicted, he told the man he assumed it would be death – but the jailor just looked thoughtful and agreed. "I ran and ran and ran [in the exercise yard] that day," he recalled.

Despite this inner agitation, his determination to show dignity in the face of the gallows almost invited the attentions of the hangman. The draft of his now famous defence

statement was returned to him by apprehensive lawyers. They begged him to excise the last paragraph, arguing that it was likely to antagonise the judge. But he refused.



**Eight men, including Nelson Mandela, sentenced to life imprisonment in the Rivonia trial leave the court with fists raised.**

The reading of the statement took four hours. It denied foreign influence or recklessness in settling on a programme of sabotage, and emphasised the ANC's desire for a non-racial democracy. Mandela spoke the last paragraph from memory, looking straight at De Wet: "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."

His handwritten notes to counsel, returned to him after his release from jail 26 years later, show he was preparing a speech in answer to the death sentence, in which he planned to say: "If I must die, let me declare for all to know that I will meet my fate like a man." Instead, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

At the time, Mandela and the ANC believed that the liberation of black South Africa could be expected within a few years – the winds of change were already blowing through the continent. Few anticipated just how long life imprisonment would be for Mandela, and the stoicism that would be demanded of him. His life was to have many gut-wrenching moments, when the fortitude of his response to mental agony would have given pride to his tribal elders. Perhaps the worst pain was emotional, the wounds caused by separation from his family and the accompanying blows, such as the loss of his eldest son, Madiba "Thembi" Thembekile, in a car crash in 1969.

Already suffering guilt about the boy – "I shall look after the family while you are gone," were the farewell words of the child when his father went underground –

Mandela received the news of Thembi's death by telegram after five years on Robben Island. "I returned to my cell and lay on my bed. I do not know how long I stayed there ... Finally Walter [Sisulu] came to me and knelt beside my bed, and I handed him the telegram. He said nothing, but only held my hand. I do not know how long he remained with me. There is nothing one man can say to another at such a time."

Then there was Winnie. The story of her peccadilloes is well known – her love affairs and her part in a variety of suspected crimes, including the murder of the 14-year-old township activist Stompie Moeketsi Seipei in 1989. Mandela's private agony is difficult to encompass, though his vulnerability is apparent in his prison letters.



Line of prisoners including Nelson Mandela  
at Robben Island prison in the mid-1960s.

At first, he was allowed to write only two letters a year, building up to two a month by 1981. They were subject, of course, to the prison censor, but the agony over

Winnie, and the passion of which that agony was a product, blazes through them. "At my age, I would have expected all the urges of youth to have faded away. But it does not appear to be so," he wrote to her in 1979, after 15 years on the island. "The mere sight of you, even the thought about you, kindles a thousand fires in me." The battle with his emotions appeared never-ending. "I have been fairly successful in putting on a mask behind which I have pined for the family alone, never rushing for the post when it comes until someone calls out my name," he told her three years earlier. "I also never linger after visits, although sometimes the urge to do so becomes quite terrible. I am struggling to suppress my emotions as I write this letter."

Released on 11 February 1990, the following year he was still struggling to keep the mask on – hands dug into a trenchcoat in the public gallery of the Rand supreme court, staring impassively as his wife was pilloried on kidnapping and assault charges relating to Stompie's death. A six-year jail sentence was reduced on appeal to a fine. It was not until his appearance before the same court – for his divorce in 1996 – that it became apparent that the reservoirs of love had finally run out. They had separated in 1992, and her appointment in 1994 as deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology in his government had ended in her dismissal within a year, amid allegations of corruption.

With Winnie, Mandela had two daughters, Zenani ("Zeni") and Zindiswa ("Zindzi"), who survive him, and fortunately all was not lost in his personal life. Soon after the divorce, he was travelling in the company of Graça Machel, widow of the Mozambican president and ANC ally Samora Machel, who had died in an air crash 15 years earlier. Marriage followed in 1998, on Mandela's 80th birthday. Graça, too, survives him, as do 17 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

However, though Mandela finally found private contentment, the mask had become integral to the persona, and not only where Winnie and his family were concerned. An American journalist, Richard Stengel, the ghostwriter of *Long Walk to Freedom*, recounted an intriguing anecdote about the time he spent travelling the country before the president-in-waiting came to power in the elections of 26-29 April 1994.

It happened at his country house in the Transkei in April 1993, when Mandela was called to the garden to meet the local police rugby team. He was busy shaking hands when his housekeeper ran out, weeping, to say there was an urgent telephone call. Excusing himself, he went inside, returning after several minutes to resume his greetings to the players. It was only later that his aides discovered the call had informed him that his close friend Chris Hani, the powerful and popular Communist party leader, had been assassinated by a white fanatic. It was the closest South Africa came to race war, and a grievous personal blow. But Mandela went on shaking hands and smiling.

In prison, stoicism was the only way to survive with his sanity intact. Even when pressure from the outside world – most notably from US corporations withdrawing investment – compelled the Nationalist party government to look to a new settlement, progress was painfully slow. In 1985, President PW Botha offered freedom if Mandela "unconditionally rejected violence as a political instrument". He refused this, the sixth

conditional offer of release in 10 years. But companies continued to leave, and in a meeting with Botha shortly before he was succeeded by FW de Klerk in August 1989, Mandela sensed a change of attitude.

Four years later, he acknowledged De Klerk's courage in admitting that "a terrible wrong had been done to our country and people through the imposition of the system of apartheid" in his acceptance speech for their shared Nobel peace prize.

After Mandela's release, his stoicism proved a boon. South Africa – its black population, in particular – desperately needed a figure of dignity to represent them. Has there ever been a figure of greater dignity than the tall, slim, stony-faced figure of Madiba (the clan name by which he was often addressed), surrounded by the white generals who had fought so hard to destroy his cause, taking the salute at the presidential inauguration in May 1994?

At times, there were suspicions that the mask was all there was to Mandela; that had his grasp of the situation been quite limited, it would have made no difference to his reputation for sagacity, such was the mystique surrounding him. There may be some grounds for this scepticism. His incarceration was, in a way, a blessing for his political reputation. He was plucked from the political arena after making a resounding, if obvious, statement of truth at the Rivonia trial, which was reiterated endlessly on his behalf during his imprisonment. A reputation for wisdom must accrue to a politician who has been consistently proven right for more than quarter of a century.



**Nelson and Winnie Mandela acknowledge  
the crowds cheering his release from prison on 11 February 1990.**

So what lay behind the mask? The record after his release suggests there was a certain naivety about Mandela, born of tutored ignorance, the product of imprisonment and deliberate isolation. His unforgettable walk through the gates of Victor Verster prison, 35 miles north-east of Cape Town, was, in a sense, a rebirth. Welcomed into an alien society, he looked about him with wide-eyed wonderment. (At one stage, he thought that a television sound-man waving a boom microphone at him was wielding a fancy assassination device.)

His sense of naive wonderment was there in his enthusiasm for Elizabeth Taylor – her image etched bright in his mind by seeing the film Cleopatra in a rare moment of official entertainment on Robben Island – and his enjoyment of the Miss World competitions staged in South Africa in the 1990s. Even his boyish welcome to the Queen at Cape Town docks in 1995 suggested a man long preserved in aspic – only such enthusiasm could account for him being one of the few men who could get away with calling her Elizabeth to her face.



Springbok captain Francois Pienaar receives  
the Rugby World Cup from Nelson Mandela in 1995.

It is worth remembering that when Mandela went to jail, Kennedy had yet to deal with the Cuban missile crisis and the Beatles were still to release their first hit. On the other hand, the enthusiasm of the inner child that survived from this earlier age could chime with that of the legion of South African sports fans – Afrikaners not least among them – as when the country hosted the 1995 rugby World Cup. Mandela wore captain François Pienaar's number six jersey for the final, went down on to the field, and the crowd loved it. A poignant echo of that moment came at the soccer World Cup final of 2010: while he still thrilled spectators by smiling and waving from a golf buggy, they knew that he had suffered the loss of his 13-year-old great-granddaughter Zenani Mandela in a car crash after a concert at the start of the month-long event.

Sometimes Mandela was like a stage magician, forced to perform by his followers' passionate belief that he was the real thing. At times, the magic did not work, as at the King's Park stadium, Durban, shortly after his release from jail, when he appealed to his audience – protagonists in the KwaZulu-Natal civil war – to throw their spears and guns into the sea. Woodenly going through the motions of rhetorical appeal, he lost the crowd, who knew, as he did, what was happening.

Perhaps this need to demonstrate charisma explained his attachment to the glamour of the very rich. For the boy in ragged trousers, who had to struggle right up to the time De Wet removed him from the world of financial responsibility, money was dazzling. Hence, once freed, he holidayed at the Irish businessman Sir Tony O'Reilly's Caribbean island and gave the go-ahead for his takeover of South Africa's biggest newspaper group, in anticipation of his "magic money" providing black empowerment in the media.

He allowed the casino king, Sol Kerzner, to host the wedding of his daughter Zinzi. He borrowed rich men's houses and flew around South Africa in their aircraft. In speeches, he often used to boast of his ability to milk wealthy businessmen for good causes. But, at times, there was suspicion as to how "good" – or, more specifically, how independent of his own interests – the causes were.

One person who seemingly had such concerns was the former opposition leader Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, who described in his memoir, *The Other Side of History* (2006), how Mandela had asked him for a large donation from the philanthropist George Soros for his African peace initiative.

"I pointed out to [Mandela] that he would have to be slightly more specific, otherwise Soros would not respond," recalled Slabbert. "He asked me to try in any case. When I contacted Soros, his reply was: 'I do not sign blank cheques.' I was in a difficult spot, but went to Mandela and as gently as possible suggested he gave content to his request, eg the travel, accommodation and salaries of two to three top executives ... I recall the smile freezing on Mandela's face, and his eyes going hard. That was the last time he talked to me about raising money. In fact, it was the last time he talked to me one-on-one in a personal, friendly manner."

In Mandela's later years, the fund-raising schemes he was seemingly inveigled into bordered on the tawdry – the attempts to market golden replicas of his hand; his emergence in 2003 as a talented painter, capable of dashing off entrancing views of Robben Island (with a little help from Vairenka Paschkea, a 26-year-old art teacher and granddaughter of PW Botha); the twinning of his name with that of Cecil Rhodes, through the merging of the Rhodes Trust and the Nelson Mandela Foundation into the Mandela Rhodes Foundation in 2002.

His naivety in raising funds abroad came closest to betraying the high principles with which his name is associated. The friendship with Indonesia's President Sukarno seemingly originated in large donations to ANC funds; the millions slipped to the liberation movement by Taiwan were linked to holding out on the two-Chinas issue. The policy of constructive engagement with the Nigerian military junta – which possibly contributed to the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his eight comrades – was not unconnected with gifts to the ANC.

In the 1980s, it emerged that the Mandela name was the subject of a deal that Winnie was negotiating with an American businessman, Robert Brown, in order to exploit it commercially as a trademark. Her move was widely criticised as evidence of personal greed.

But Nelson, too, sought such a deal. From affidavits before the Johannesburg high court in the Mandela v Ayob case in 2007, involving allegations that the family lawyer, Ismael Ayob, had pocketed some of Mandela's money, it emerged that after what was known as the Tinancier agreement had been signed by Mandela, transferring a wide range of copyrights to a company owned by Ayob, he registered eight variations of his name as trademarks. Subsequently, he was in the process of closing a deal with an Afrikaner businessman, Douw Steyn, by which Steyn would have been able to exploit the Mandela name in the marketing of a game farm. The ANC leader would have received 20% of the profits.

When this deal collapsed for legal reasons, Mandela approached a group of wealthy businessmen for donations to support him and his family. A trust fund was set up, and between September 16 2002 and March 10 2005, it received 18.5m rand (about £1.7m). There does not appear to be a charitable dimension to this fund outside the Mandela family.



Nelson Mandela and Graça Machel  
on the Queen Elizabeth 2 ocean liner.

Nonetheless, Mandela considered himself a man of the world. He displayed no signs of personal avarice; he cut his presidential salary when he came to power, and lopped off a further third of it as a regular donation to a children's fund. Prison, one sensed, had imbued him with an understanding of the irrelevance of personal possessions. His fundraising activities were always for the sake of others, pre-eminently for his people and the ANC, to which he gave intense loyalty as the vehicle of liberation. It was a cause important enough to justify compromises, but the sense of principle, the attachment to ideals – if not precisely the honouring of them – was always there.

Mandela was a flawed man, as all men are flawed, and in the face of this one struggles to discover the roots of his greatness. He was certainly courageous, though he arguably failed his family, in more ways than one – by his first wife's account, he even tried to throttle her on one occasion. One of his sons never visited him in prison and the other rarely wrote, both seemingly feeling a sense of betrayal. And then, of course, there was Winnie, for whom he carried some burden of guilt, even if he was the one who divorced her.

There was, too, Winnie's advocacy of "necklacing" – execution by burning, with tyres around the victim's neck – which was hugely damaging to South Africa's liberation struggle. It was used primarily against alleged informers and public functionaries seen as collaborators, but other victims included people held guilty of minor infractions of community solidarity, such as breaches of a consumer boycott, and old women held to be witches.

South Africa's truth and reconciliation commission has estimated that more than 400 people were killed by necklacing. In its final report, it observed that "although the official policy of both the UDF [the broadly-based United Democratic Front] and the ANC was to condemn necklacing, the public statements of the leadership of these organisations were sometimes ambiguous and appeared to give tacit, and sometimes overt, approval to the practice."

It has been long assumed that Mandela, in prison, would have strongly condemned necklacing. Indeed, it was reported, and widely believed, that after Winnie had raised the issue – in 1986, when she declared that South Africans would liberate themselves with matchboxes and tyres – her husband had summoned her to Pollsmoor prison, in Cape Town and reprimanded her for it. It has emerged, however, from a document that circulated among journalists and academics in South Africa, and which finally dribbled into print in 2005, that Mandela condoned his wife's statement. The document, the minutes of a meeting between Mandela, Winnie and Ayob inside Pollsmoor prison, said: "NM approved of WM's necklace speech. He said that it was a good thing as there has not been one black person who has attacked WM."



Nelson Mandela with then South African president FW de Klerk in Oslo before receiving their shared Nobel peace prize in 1993.

It transpired that the document had been found by the renowned South African editor Anthony Sampson, while he was working on Mandela's authorised biography. Sampson has since died, but his chief researcher, James Sanders, said there had been a row over whether the document should be published, with threats from the Mandela camp to withdraw co-operation if he used it. Eventually, Sampson pulled the document.

As a speaker, Mandela was no Churchill. Other than the Rivonia defence, few of his utterances will stand the test of time. His command of MK was brief, and notable for little more than the arrest of the high command, including himself. The incompetence of the ANC government in South Africa under his leadership – while understandable in the light of ministerial inexperience and the sabotage of their efforts by the old guard civil service – offered little testament to his administrative abilities. Arguably the single most significant contribution he made to the governance of South Africa during his presidency was his decision to stand down in 1999 after one five-year term, a gesture intended to discourage his successors from extending their time in office beyond the limits allowed by the constitution.

One suspects that this move came as something of a relief to the ANC leadership, who spent much of their time assuring the media that Mandela's presidential policy announcements – such as his intention to extend the franchise to 14-year-olds – were not to be taken seriously. Mandela himself conceded in retirement that his government should have paid greater attention to the HIV/Aids epidemic. When his son Makgotho died from the disease in 2005, Mandela announced the fact openly, and called for the fight against it to be redoubled.

It was also an open secret that Thabo Mbeki was running the government from behind the throne, buoyed up by the international goodwill attracted by Mandela. Mandela's presidency was spent doing little more than playing host to the celebrities and politicians who flooded into the country to shake the great man's hand. One suspects that he seized on the suggestion that he stand down after a single term with relief at the prospect of escaping a job that was little more than a burden.

Mankind has become used to discovering its heroes have feet of clay, and in Mandela's case, much can be explained away by the single fact of his incarceration. How could anyone, cut off from the rest of humanity for more than a quarter of a century, be anything but unworldly, particularly in the handling of money? And it should be remembered that the necklacing remark was made in emotional circumstances, in the context of a prison visit by a woman with whom he was then desperately in love. At the same time, it does raise questions about the judgment of a man the world has come to know as a political saint.

So why use the word great? Perhaps it was Mandela's appreciation of politics as theatre, combined with his talent as the great conciliator. Many will have their own stories of the "Madiba magic" at work. For this writer, it was a small episode that took place on the steps of the civic centre, under a fluttering flag of the Boer republic, in a dusty village in the middle of the giant scrubland known as the Karoo. The date was 15 August 1995.



**Nelson Mandela at a concert at Wembley Stadium  
in 1990 to celebrate his release from prison.**

The place was Orania, Northern Cape, the last refuge of the Afrikaner fundamentalists who fled the approach of modernity with the great trek of 1835-42. The occasion was a tea party. Mandela was the guest, the host was Betsy Verwoerd, the 94-year-old widow of the notorious President Hendrik Verwoerd, whose killing in 1966 had brought no pleasure to his opponents imprisoned on Robben Island – in Long Walk to Freedom, Mandela asserted that neither he nor the ANC had ever supported political assassination. One moment of that extraordinary meeting stands out for me, overwhelming all the other extraordinary events of post-apartheid South Africa.

It came as Betsy, bereft of her glasses, struggled to read a statement to reporters gathered on the steps of the community hall. Mandela, *sotto voce*, prompted her in Afrikaans, reading over her shoulder. Once finished, she smiled her thanks up at the black man towering over her. He smiled fondly back.

To appreciate that moment, one needs a particular understanding of the South African story. To the world, South Africa has long been literally a black-and-white issue, the goodies and baddies easily identifiable by the colour of their skin. But that was always an over-simplification, qualified from the early days of the anti-apartheid struggle by

the likes of Fischer, the Rev Beyers Naudé and Slovo, and compromised more recently by the reform movement under De Klerk, who saw the necessity of letting Mandela take the country forward in the election of 1994.

Another way of understanding South Africa is to recognise it as something of an Old Testament story, a tale of people struggling to do right by their gods and failing time and time again. In the second half of the 20th century, these people, exhausted by the struggle with themselves and against one another, had need of a unifying figure to give them a vision of nationhood.

Mandela saw the need, donned the mask that the role demanded and gave his life for his people. There lies his greatness, and hence the tears that flow at his death, in a much beloved country.

**Rolihlahla Nelson Mandela, statesman, born 18 July 1918; died 5 December 2013.**

**Kindly visit the following Web Links to know MORE about him**

[01] <https://www.mandela.ac.za/>

[02] [https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/367338.Nelson\\_Mandela](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/367338.Nelson_Mandela)

[03] <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/nelson-mandela>

[04] <https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/index.shtml>

[05] <https://www.britannica.com/topic/apartheid>

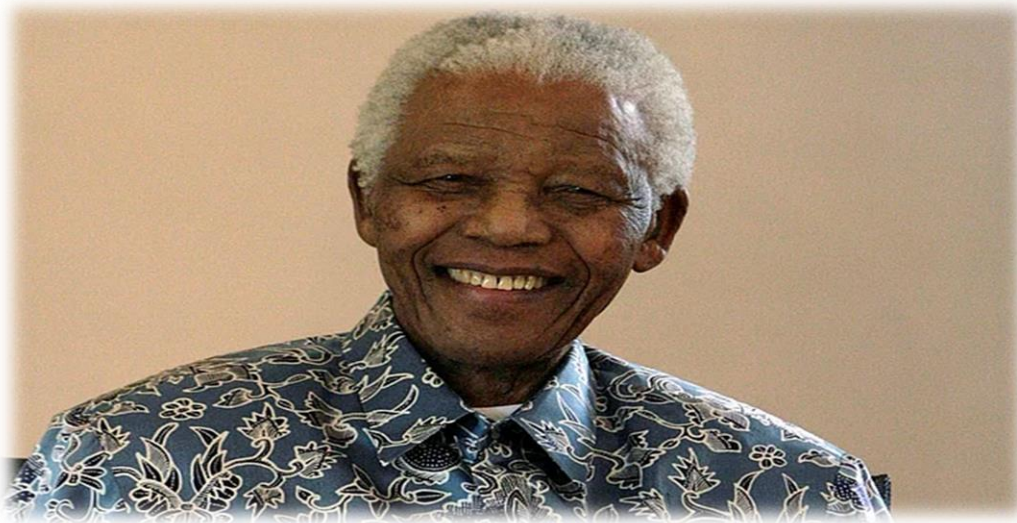
[06] <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nelson-Mandela/Incarceration>

[07] <https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/legacy.shtml>

[08] <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/a-brief-history-of-nelson-mandela-s-life-nelson-mandela-centre-of-memory/8gXhEWID5fOgLA?hl=en>

[09] <https://www.mandeladay.com/>

- [11] <https://humanrights.ca/story/story-nelson-mandela>
- [12] <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2013/06/11/190671704/the-day-nelson-mandela-walked-out-of-prison>
- [13] <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarules.html>
- [14] <https://www.nelsonmandelamuseum.org.za/>
- [15] <https://libguides.nypl.org/NYPLMandelaDay/biography>
- [16] <https://www.worldbank.org/en/archive/history/exhibits/Nelson-Mandela-South-Africa-World-Bank-Group>



South Africa`s former president Nelson Mandela waits to meet Paralympics team at the NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION in Houghton, South Africa, 3 October 2008



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